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THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, DISARMAMENT AND OTHER RELATED FIELDS

Working paper submitted by Australia

Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security

1. The development and dissemination of scientific understanding and technology, and their applications, can enhance international confidence and security through their contributions to development or through their role in arms control.

2. Science and technology applications in the military sphere can also generate tension between nations, by inference of a threatening intent, by making weapons harder to detect and destroy, by leading to more indiscriminate weapons, by consuming increasing financial resources (which in turn stimulates the pressure for arms sales) and by generating competition for weapons capabilities.

3. In some cases, transparency in weapons capability can be confidence-building, and to that extent States are encouraged to share information on developments in science and technology in the military sphere.

Science and technology for disarmament

4. The negotiation of arms control agreements should be supported by an understanding of relevant science and technology, and experts therefore have a particular contribution to make to such negotiations.

5. The development of, and cooperation in attaining access to, science and technology applicable to environmentally sound weapons disposal, conversion of military assets to civilian uses and the verification of implementation of arms control agreements, is a high priority.

The role of science and technology in other related fields

6. Science and technology can contribute to sustainable economic and social development. Underdevelopment is a source of international insecurity.

7. Therefore, the acquisition of science and technology for peaceful development purposes should be encouraged. States should cooperate in the dissemination of science and technology.

8. In the development of science and technology for military purposes, States should direct resources particularly towards science and technology which can also have civilian uses. As appropriate, and in accordance with normal commercial practice, they should share information about the possible civilian applications of military-related science and technology.

The transfer of (high) technology with military applications

9. States have a right to individual and collective self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. They are permitted to use science and technology for the purposes of such self-defence.

10. Caution should be exercised in the transfer of science and technology which can be used for offensive purposes or where its acquisition will generate or contribute to international insecurity. The development or enhancement of international cooperation to address the transfer of science and technology in such circumstances should be promoted.

11. States should adhere to and abide by the international instruments which govern the acquisition or transfer of science and technology relevant to weapons of mass destruction and missiles.

12. International transparency in the transfer of science and technology relevant to military purposes, and in the operation of export control regimes, should be encouraged.